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Northern Messenger

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'The "Messenger" is far superior to anything I know of for the Sunday School.'—W. Ruddy, Toronto, Ont.

Seeking the King.

A Tale of the Wise Men.

(Grace M. Everett, in the 'Zion's Herald.')

It is evening. The last rays of the sun rest upon the hilltops as though they would bestow a parting benediction, and then vanish. At that moment the heavy door of an ancient temple opens, and twelve men, clad in priestly vestments, come forth. In solemn silence and with stately tread they move up the road to where a huge rock stands alone on a slight eminence. There they stop, and each takes his station upon or about the rock, fixing his eyes intently upon the heavens.

These are no ordindry men. They are the purest and best of which their country can boast. They spend their time in prayer and meditation. If it were not so, they never would have been chosen to keep this sacred vigil. They are learned men also. They are versed in all the sacred writings of their people, and they can read the heavens as an open book. In a word, they are magi, the wise men of the East.

But even these are not all equal in attainments or character. Mark you that man who stands on the very crest of the rock. He is old. His hair is as white as the driven snow, and his beard falls to his girdle. He is more in earnest than the others. They watch the heavens; he searches them. His keen eyes never move from the starry depths above them. And as he looks his lips move in prayer.

'Oh, that He would come!' he murmurs. 'Oh, that I might behold Him! Oh, that His star might appear this night!'

As the hours pass, his feelings grow more intense. 'The altar fires burn low,' he cries, 'and the worshippers wax faint. They groan beneath oppression. They say, "We have offered our sacrifices and poured out our oblations. But what does it profit us? God does not hear our prayers, neither does He regard our sufferings." Oh, that He would come! Oh, that His star would appear this night!' Thus he prays.

At length the hour of midnight comes, and is gone. Then suddenly there is a cry:

'The star! The star!'

Instantly all eyes turn to the east. There they behold, hanging just above the horizon, a star of such brilliancy that it outshone all the host of heaven.

'It is His star!' exclaims the old man. 'He hath come, and I must find Him!'

'But where wilt thou seek Him?' asks the one next to him.

'I have heard,' replies the old man, 'that there is a people who dwell toward the setting sun in a province called Judea. It is said that they have long expected a Prince. It may be that He will be born among them. I will travel thither and inquire by the way.'

'But Judea is afar off,' protests the other. 'Thou art old; thou canst not wander so far from home.'

The Sage lifts his head, his chest heaves, and his eyes flash. 'For many years,' he cries,—'my father's father stood upon this rock, and kept this vigil; and after him, my father watched; and now for threescore years

I, too, have waited. And each night I have prayed that I might live to see His day. It has dawned at last; the Prince is born! And shall I not pay Him homage?'

For a moment they regard him in reverential silence. Then one exclaims; 'Father, if indeed thine heart is set to find the King, then I will go with thee to do Him homage.'

'And I, also,' says another.

The Sage bows his head. 'It is well,' he says. 'We will set forth on the third day hence.' Then, after a pause: 'The vigil is ended forever. Let us seek our fellows.'

With joyful haste they descend from the rock and make their way to the temple.

It is a long journey from the East to Jerusalem. Lofty mountains, mighty rivers, and broad deserts lie between. But these can form no barrier to those who are seeking the King. At first, the star shines brightly on their path, but later it fades and finally disappears. But this does not discourage them. Day after day they journey westward. Often the Sage draws from his bosom a scroll and reads therein. Sometimes he converses with his companions on the coming King and the glories of his reign. Then, again, he falls into a long and deep meditation. Thus the days become weeks, and the weeks, months.

At length one afternoon the towers and bulwarks of Jerusalem rise into view. The sight is glorious, but the travelers do not pause to consider its beauties. They press on and seek admittance at the Water Gate.

Even when they are within the walls they do not rest, but begin at once to inquire for Him who is the object of their visit. The narrow streets are thronged with natives of every clime. The Roman soldier, the Greek proselyte, the Jewish rabbi and the heathen courtier are all present, but are all too busy to pay any heed to the strangers who have just arrived. These continue their search, however, with unwearied zeal. They turn their steps in a northerly direction and soon come to Herod's temple. There they pause and gaze with wonder and admiration upon that pile of marble and gold. As they stand thus a Levite passes out and approaches them. As he draws near the Sage addresses him with the oft-repeated question:

'Sir, where is He that is born King of the Jews?'

The Levite stops. 'A King born to the Jews? I know not. No prince hath been born within the palace these many years.' And he passes on.

It is late now, and they seek an inn where they may rest for the night. Early the next morning, however, they renew their search. This time they descend to the lower city and roam about among the shops and bazaars. They see everything displayed for sale, from an Arabian veil to a pair of sandals. A restless crowd passes to and fro along the street. The air is filled with the jargon of many tongues. The noise and confusion almost bewilder those who have spent their lives in quiet study and meditation. They are about to leave the quarter when they notice a man standing in the market-place. His broad phylacteries and deep fringe proclaim him to be a Pharisee. He may have time to answer their question, so they address him:

'Tell us, we pray thee, where is He that is born King of the Jews?'

'What say ye?' he asks, awaking from his revery.

'Where is He that is born King of the Jews?'

'The Jews have no true King,' he replies. 'Know ye not that a hated Edomite hath usurped the throne of David?'

'Yea,' they answer. 'But hath not the Promised One, the Great Deliverer, been born? For we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him.'

'Ah! ye are seeking the Messiah. We also long for His coming. The time is at hand, but He hath not been revealed.'

'But we have seen His star in the East.'

'It cannot be. He would show Himself first unto Israel, and we have seen no sign.' And he turns coldly away.

All day they search the city for the King, but they find Him not. At sunset they return to the inn. There they find a friendly merchant.

'Who are ye?' he asks as they enter the courtyard. 'And whence come ye?'

'We are strangers from the East,' they reply, 'who have come hither seeking the King of the Jews. Canst thou tell where He dwelleth?'

'Ah!' replies the other, 'I have heard of you. Ye have set all Jerusalem in an uproar by your coming. Some say "What meaneth this star in the East? Hath the Messiah indeed come? We must look into this matter." Others say, "Will the Messiah reveal Himself unto the Gentiles and not to the Jews?"'

'But hath no sign been given you?' asks the Sage.

'Nay, nay,' replies the other, 'there hath been no sign. And yet this doth remind me of a wondrous story I heard a year ago. Some keepers of the temple flocks declared that as they watched one night upon the plains an angel spoke to them, and bade them go to the neighboring village where they would find a newborn babe lying in a manger. They went as they were bidden and found the child. Him they devoutly believed to be the Messiah of Israel. But it was an idle tale, it came to naught.'

The listeners watch the narrator with closest attention, that no word may escape them. As he continues their faces light up with hope, but as he closes they drop with disappointment. Indeed, the Sage arises quickly and ascends to the roof. He who has waited sixty years in hope is now despondent, and he who has traveled five hundred leagues with cheerfulness is now cast down.

'Have I left my native land for naught?' he cries. 'Have I come hither only to be mocked?' Then he looks at the blue vault above him and exclaims: 'Nay, nay! It cannot be. Men may prove false, but the heavens—never! I will seek Him another day.'

Just as he utters these words he becomes conscious of a lad standing before him.

'Sir, there is a messenger below who desires to speak with thee,' he says.

Immediately the Sage descends to the gate, where he finds his companions waiting for him. A voice from the outer darkness whispers:

'Are ye the strangers from the East?'

'We are,' they reply.

'Then make haste and get you to the palace, for Herod desireth to speak with you there. But tell no man.' Then there was silence.

A few moments later the visitors leave the inn. They thread the narrow streets, now dark and deserted, pass through the Gennath Gate in the old wall that has stood since the days of King David, and enter the palace grounds. There they follow a walk which winds through a grove to the palace. Herod with his taste for beautiful architecture has not spared any expense on this structure. It is second only to the temple in magnificence. Even in the starlight the visitors can mark its broad extent, its lofty towers and numerous porticoes. On entering they are led through stately courts and chambers until they come to a large hall, lavishly decorated and richly furnished. There they are bidden to await the king's pleasure.

In a few minutes he enters. He is an old man burdened with the weight of many years misspent.

'Are you the men,' he asks, 'who have troubled Jerusalem with your talk concerning a star?'

'Most noble king,' they reply, 'we are Magi from the Far East who have come hither, not to trouble your kingdom nor to disturb her peace, but to worship Him who is born King of the Jews.'

'But if ye have come from the Far East,' asks Herod, 'what do you know concerning the King of the Jews?'

Then the Sage stands forth and says: 'Most noble king, our forefathers received a promise that war should not always desolate the earth, nor injustice oppress the sons of men; but at some time a Prince should come who would rule with judgment, and a King who would reign in splendor. And that at His birth a star would appear in the heavens. The people believed the prophecy, and wrote it in a book. That book we have.'

'But,' says Herod, growing impatient, 'tell me concerning the star. Have ye seen it?'

'We have,' they reply. 'As we kept watch upon the Mount of Victory we saw it arise in the east.'

'How long since it appeared?'

'More than twelve moons have waxed and waned since then.'

'But tell me more plainly. Did it appear at planting or in harvest?'

'The almond trees were blooming.'

'At what hour did it arise?'

'At midnight.'

'It is well,' says His Majesty. 'The King whom ye seek is at Bethlehem, for there, it is written, He should be born. Go, search for Him diligently, and when ye have found Him bring me word, that I may come and worship Him also. I have commanded the gatekeeper to allow you to leave the city.'

So they leave the palace and start for Bethlehem. When they are without the city walls the star which they had seen in the East bursts on their sight.

'Now will we praise God, the Just and Holy One,' they exclaim, 'for He hath not forsaken us, but hath sent His star to guide us. We will see Him whom we desire; we will worship Him whom we seek.'

They reach Bethlehem just as the dawn is streaking the eastern sky with light. It does not take them long to find the house. It is a humble dwelling not intended for the abode of a king. They enter, however, and find within the foster father, the young mother, and the King—a child upon her knee.

'I have found Him,' murmurs the Sage, and drops on his knees in adoration.

Presently he opens a casket which they have brought with them, and takes from it a wallet of gold coin and jars of rare spices, both frankincense and myrrh.

'O King, thou Blessed One!' he says, 'accept our homage and receive the gifts we now present to Thee.'

They tarry in Bethlehem that day, but the next morning they depart for their own country. As they journey the strength of the Sage fails. He grows weaker day by day. At length it becomes apparent that he will never see his native land again. As his companions gather about him to bid him farewell, he sees their grief, and says:

'Weep not for me, my children. Why should I live any longer? Mine eyes have seen the King; my knees have bowed before Him; my hands have given Him of my treasure. What more could I desire?' Then, raising his hands toward heaven, he exclaims, 'It is enough, I die happy!'

Yuletide Music.

(Margaret S. Haycraft, in the 'Friendly Visitor.')

Oh, heart, whate'er may be thy need,
A song of praise be singing!
O'er snowy wood and hill and mead
The Christmas bells are ringing;
'The Friend of friends draws near,' they say,
'The Prince of Peace is born to-day.'

For every wound He beareth balm,
For every trouble healing;
Through every storm His voice of calm—
His whisper sweet—is stealing;
Oh, heavy-laden and oppress'd!
He bears for thee His dower of rest.

The Christmas chimings comfort bring
To every soul that hearkens;
For at the coming of the King
Each shadow-cloud that darkens
Shall vanish 'neath His smile Divine,
And day shall break, and light outshine.

He comes, our Help, our Strength, our Stay,
With royal gifts and graces,
To bear our sorrows far away,
And wreathe life's desert places—
The gentle Shepherd ever kind
Comes down to earth His sheep to find.

Let young and old thanksgiving swell,
And chant the Christmas story;
Resound the music, field and dell!
Oh, waves, repeat His glory
Who left the Home that knows not sin
To bring the lost, the needy in.

Wilt thou receive the Heav'nly Guest,
Oh, heart of mine, for ever?
His love shall make thy Noël blest,
And leave thee lonely never;
Oh, Prince of Peace, unworthy I,
Yet of Thy mercy, Christ, draw nigh!

It is almost as presumptuous to think that you can do nothing as to think that you can do anything.—Phillips Brooks.

LESSON,—SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1908.

Review.

Read Proverbs iv.

Golden Text for the Quarter.

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Prov. iv., 23.

Home Readings.

Monday, December 21.—I. Chr. xvii., 1-14.
Tuesday, December 22.—II. Sam. xv., 1-12.
Wednesday, December 23.—II. Sam. xviii., 24-33.
Thursday, December 24.—I. Ki. i., 32-40, 50-53.
Friday, December 25.—I. Ki. iii., 4-15.
Saturday, December 26.—Prov. iv., 1-13.
Sunday, December 27.—Prov. iv., 14-27.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

To-day we have to review the lessons we have learnt during the past three months, that is, twelve lessons in all. Two of these lessons have been special ones, last Sunday's, which was the Christmas lesson, and three Sundays before that when we had the temperance lesson, so we will leave these two lessons until the last and take up the others, because they are all parts of the same story. Two from twelve leaves ten, just as many lessons as you have fingers, so we may as well check them off on our fingers. First, there is the lesson with a procession in it, the second has a palace in it, the third a cripple, the fourth a prayer, the fifth a bad prince, the sixth a sad father, the seventh a shepherd, the eighth a new king, the ninth a wish that came true, and the tenth a building all covered with gold inside. (Go over these again.) Now what we want to find out about first, the procession, is—what was it all about and where was it going; about the palace—who lived in it, and what duty did it make him think of; about the cripple—who was he, and why was he invited to the king's palace; about the prayer—who prayed it; about the bad prince—what was his name, and what did he do; about the sad father—what made him so unhappy; about the shepherd—who is the shepherd, and what he does for his sheep; about the new king—what was his name, and where was he king; about the wish—who wished it and who made it come true; and about the building—where was it built, and why was it so beautiful? Now we will start again at the procession. You all like processions, don't you? There was music at this procession just as there is at the processions you like to see. There were crowds of people and King David led the procession, and do you remember what it was all about, and where they were all going? David had been made King of Israel by God, and now he and all his princes were bringing God's ark up to Jerusalem so that people would come to worship God before it there. He had a tent made to cover it and all the people were very glad because now with God's ark in Jerusalem they would not forget to serve God as they should. Our second lesson we said had a palace in it. Who lived in this palace? Why, the king of course, King David. Did he like his beautiful palace? Yes, he liked it very much, but at last he began to think that he should not be living in such a lovely home while the ark of God was only in a tent. He determined to build a lovely house, too, for God and he told his friend Nathan the prophet about his plan, but did God want him to? No, God said for David to wait and leave the building of this new temple for David's son who should be king after him. God promised David that He would bless and help this son and always remember how David wanted to serve Him. It was in this very same palace that we find the story of our next lesson. We said this next lesson had a cripple, a lame man, in it. Does anyone remember the story about this poor lame man that David helped?

FOR THE SENIORS.

The lessons for the past quarter include the story contained in the chapters from II. Sam. vi., I. Kings viii., inclusive. The story takes David from the first flush of his gratitude to God for his preservation and elevation to the throne, through his many failures and repentings, through his sins and their inevitable results, but also through his continued upward struggle in faith in God, and closes with the reign of his young son Solomon, full of promise from the training, example and successes of his father, a period in all of something like fifty or sixty years. It might possibly be more interesting to review at this time the lessons of the last half-year, and compare the reigns and characters of Saul, David, and Solomon. Each of them reigning some forty years, gives a total of one hundred and twenty years from the beginning of Saul's reign to the close of Solomon's, the full period of a united kingdom of Israel. Israel rose in these years from a number of scattered and inconsiderable tribes to the period of its greatest extent and power. Sacred history tells here the same story that is continually found in secular: the power that lies in united action, and the sadder lesson that Solomon's reign shows, the decay that comes with luxury, misused power, and the oppression of the poorer classes by the rich. There are very many lessons to be drawn from the lives of these three men, of lost opportunities, of false values in comparing worldly views with God's standard, of struggle and failure in temptation, of manly repentance, and of the great temptations that lie in power and wealth.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, December 27.—Topic—Foreign missions: The new life of China. Ezek. xxxvii., 1-14.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Monday, December 21.—All power is His. Dan. vii., 13, 14.
Tuesday, December 22.—His words to Mary. John xx., 11-18.
Wednesday, December 23.—His words to the women. Matt. xxviii., 9, 10.
Thursday, December 24.—His appearance to Peter. Luke xxiv., 33, 34.
Friday, December 25.—His words to ten apostles John xx., 19-23.
Saturday, December 26.—His words to seven disciples. John xxi., 1-14.
Sunday, December 27.—Topic—Christ's last words to His disciples. Matt. xxviii., 16-20; Mark xvi., 19, 20.

Spiritual Results.

(By the Rev. J. B. Flanagan.)

We shall come fatally short of following the one infallible example of effective teaching if we do not aim always at spiritual results. Christ wasted no time on non-essentials, and never lost sight of the universal needs of the race. To save sinners and edify believers He tirelessly toiled through the brief period of His public ministry. When He ascended to the Father the Holy Spirit came to continue and complete His work. Jesus said He, the Holy Ghost, when He should come, would reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. To seek and to save the lost He lived and taught and suffered on earth, and now offers up His perpetual high-priestly intercessions in heaven. For this the Spirit came to abide in the believer and to work through all the angencies of the Church of God. Success in this atones for many deficiencies. Seek to save. Jesus did; as He succeeded so can you.

Missionary Work in Sunday School.

'Make people see the need.' They 'will' respond when they see it. Half of us do not see the need. Our time is so taken up we cannot read the missionary news as we would like, nor can we be enthused by attending a convention like this. Then 'tell' us about it. Talk to us about the home missionary as if both you and I loved him and his family. Tell us all about his trials.

Let us subscribe to something 'definite.' Now suppose each class in Sunday school had a little place of their very own to send the money to. Perhaps unite two or three classes. Discuss it often with them. Find out all about it. Suppose they were educating a little Indian boy and he is known to them, as well as your efforts and those of the home missionary and the little Indian himself, can make him known. Let them write to him and he to them. Don't you believe the boys' hearts would be touched and the pennies they gave, because they were given to a definite object, would be real missionary pennies and not just given because mother told them to give them to some misty missionary who lived away off they didn't know nor care where.

Religious News.

The following quotation is from a missionary's report:—

'Leung Sz Po (one of our Christians) has done very faithful service during the year. In fact, for over two years she has, without any remuneration from the Mission, been doing the regular work of a Bible-woman, going daily from home to home, speaking the Gospel to the women of the city. This service is a great joy to her, and she is always cheerful and happy in telling the story of the Saviour's love. She has not much of this world's goods, and sometimes her rice-jar gets pretty low; but she really puts her trust in the Lord, and He never suffers her to lack any good thing. In telling of her work in the meetings she often weeps over the sins of the women of China and the souls of her relatives out of Christ. One day, when out preaching the Gospel in the homes of the women, she was asked: "How much do you receive for your work?" and her reply was: "Nothing; I do it because I love the Lord Jesus." Not a few will agree with her superintendent that such service is bound to make an impression on the minds of the heathen.'

The 'Ta Tung Pao,' a weekly publication for the leaders of Chinese thought and public opinion, was started at the beginning of 1904 by the Rev. W. Arthur Cornaby, of the Wesleyan Mission. It was then a single-folded sheet, but has since grown into a two-penny magazine of thirty-eight pages. For some time it has had 2,500 subscribers among the Chinese officials; all the viceroys and governors of the provinces have taken it in; and of late months it has had a constant reader in Prince Tsai Tse, cousin of the Emperor, who wrote a letter to the editor (August 1) for publication, enclosing his photograph to be reproduced as a frontispiece, and saying he had gained much instruction and inspiration from its articles. And this in regard to a journal which, while dealing with all general topics for the uplift of China, has published some very direct presentations of the claims of God and Christ.

Acknowledgments.

LABRADOR FUND.

Received for the launch:—Atwood Epworth League, Newry, Ont., $2.00; Ralph D. Grimmon, Black River Bridge, Ont., $5.00; Mrs. Lilian Evans, Nutana, Sask., $2.50; Agnes Glen, Cranford, N.J., $5.00; Albert Mace, Chandos, Ont., $5.00; Friends, McAlpine, Ont., $11.00; Total.. .. .. .

Correspondence

ROYAL LEAGUE OF KINDNESS.

I pledge myself
To speak kindly to others,
To speak kindly of others,
To think kind thoughts,
To do kind deeds.

Anyone may become a member of the R. L. of K. by copying out the above pledge, signing and sending it to the editor.

PLEDGE CARDS.—For those who wish to have them, we issue neat and durable pledge cards, 4 inches by six, printed in purple and white and ready to hang on the wall. Single cards, five cents and two cents for postage; six cards to one address, twenty-five cents and two cents for postage.

BADGES.—We also issue for sale with the pledge card, if desired, a neat brooch pin of fine hard enamel, in the above design of a bow in our own league colors, purple and white. Single badge with pledge card, and postage included, twenty-five cents; five badges with pledge cards and postage included to one address, one dollar.

Mark all orders on both envelope and letter with the three letters R.L.K.

Last week we suggested that our members should write giving their opinion of the new plan, but considering the growing list of our members and the number who have already expressed a wish to have these pledge cards and badges, we have decided not to wait until we hear from all our members, but to be ready for the orders as they come in, so the sooner you write, the sooner you will have your pledge card and badge; there will be no waiting for the next one to order before you get yours.

We are glad, too, to make the new offer to-day of sending five of the badge pins to one address for one dollar. That is, if five friends send together they can secure their pledge cards and the enamelled brooch pin badges for one dollar which includes postage. Only clubs of five members or more can secure this advantage.

Write soon and send in your order.

Ethel Smith, Winnipeg; Robert De Witt, Maud De Witt, and Hattie De Witt, S., N.B., Ewart G. Cook, and Lillian A. Cook, M. R., P.E.I., and Muriel Ward, Toronto, are the new members for this week.

All our members have a royal chance for showing what their pledge really means at this time of the year. Christmas, of course, should make everybody kind and happy, but sometimes it doesn't. You, who belong to this royal league of ours, must be more than ever careful now, not to let any shadow of unkindness spoil this happy time of the year. How very many ways of being kind there are at Christmas! Why, just that could keep our members busy now all the time.

Y. C., Ont.

Dear Editor,—This is my first attempt to write to the 'Messenger,' but I have been reading the letters and enjoyed them very much, so thought I would try one myself. I live on a farm and have a dog named Gelert. He can jump through a hoop and stand on his hind legs for his meals. He also likes to play ball and will catch the ball every time and stands up and puts it into my hand. I have four sisters and one brother, one of my sisters is training for a nurse, and my brother is going to Business College.

KATHLEEN GILBERT (aged 10.)

S. D., Ont.

Dear Editor,—We had a very pleasant time at Thanksgiving. My cousin and a friend were coming home from University and we looked forward to that as the event of the day. We were to have a Thanksgiving service in our church Monday evening, and my cousin and his friend were asked to sing. So they sang bass and tenor in a quartett. My sister sang alto and a very sweet soprano sang soprano. My cousin's friend played an exquisite organ solo. They stayed till Tuesday morning when we had a very sad parting. Here are some riddles:—1. Why is a kiss like a rumor? 2. What did Jack Frost say when he kissed the violet? 3. What moral does a weathercock suggest?

BESSIE STEWART.

C., Ont.

Dear Editor,—I am a boy ten years old. I go to school every day and am in the second class. We like our teacher very well. We live on a farm five miles from Lucan. My father is a merchant and he deals in eggs and poultry.

JOSEPH W. LEWIS.

O., Ont.

Dear Editor,—I have a grey kitten we call 'Princess,' she is a great pet, and wakes me up every morning at half past seven. Perhaps she thinks it is time for me to go to school. She is very quiet and contented and loves me, and I love her. I am eight years old and am in the Second Book. I think the answer to Carrie Sobey's riddle (Nov. 13), is 'Three (pigs) feet.' I was glad to read the letter from Ruth Goforth. My brother heard Mrs. Goforth tell about the work in China, when she (Mrs. Goforth) was here.

DOUGLAS CAMERON HILL.

C., Ont.

Dear Editor,—I thought that I would write to the 'Messenger,' as I have read so many letters that the boys and girls have been writing. There are about thirty-six scholars going to our school now. We have a very nice teacher. I am going to school every day.

LILLIE GAGNON.

R., Que.

Dear Editor,—I am a little girl ten years of age, and live on a farm about three miles from town. I walk to school every day a little over a mile. I am in the Fourth Grade, and of all the studies I take I like geography and reading best. At school we play a good many games, such as wicket, tag, turn-out-black and others, I like all of them. Last summer we took a two-weeks trip on our vacation, first we went to Sherbrooke and stayed over night, we then went to Barton, Vt., and rode sixteen miles with our uncle to my aunt's house where we stayed ten days picnicking, etc. And then returned to Sherbrooke and stayed three days. Altogether, we had a very enjoyable trip, I think.

R. IVA HEALY.

OUR PICTURES.

1. 'My Sister's Jardiniere.' V. A. Pettypiece (age 11), F., Ont.
2. 'Flag.' Stanley Cummings (age 6), G. M., P.Que.
3. 'Off to Shovel Snow.' Julia MacEachern (age 12), R. P., P.E.I.
4. 'A Pitcher.' Duncan McQueen (age 8), S., N.B.
5. 'A Sunbonnet Baby.' Bertha J. Davidson (age 10), E., Alta.
6. 'Arms of Quebec.' John William Paton (age 11), Montreal.
7. 'A Flag.' Muriel Ward (age 9), Toronto.
8. 'Pot of Flowers.' Margaret MacEachern, R. P., P.E.I.
9. 'A Young Girl.' Janie L. Libbie, B., N.B.
10. 'Sweeping.' Russell Hicks (age 7), Toronto.
11. 'My Cock.' Clarence Nettleton (age 10), P., Ont.
12. 'Washing Day.' Merle McCallum (age 10), E., Alta.
13. 'A Tree.' Rae Cowan, Toronto.
14. 'A House.' Alma Parker (age 9), S., Man.

OTHER LETTERS.

Here is a suggestion from a grown-up reader of the correspondence page, L.D.S., Maxwell. This 'grown-up' wants all the young temperance workers among our correspondents to do what they can in those parts of Canada wherever there may be voting on local option or other temperance measures. What can children do when voting is the question? 'In some places,' writes L.D.S., 'children have marched through the streets on voting day or shortly before, carrying banners on which was inscribed the petition 'Please vote for us, the children, and so put down the liquor traffic.' This has been done in a good many places and the children have proved that their influence was great even though they had no votes.

Ormie Dixon, W. T., Ont., writes 'I was in Montreal two weeks ago and had a good time.' Your drawing is very good, Ormie.

Myrtle Whitmell, D., Ont., sends Christmas greetings, 'although' she says, 'it is a long way off.' Very near now, Myrtle, isn't it?

Muriel Ward, Toronto, tells of some doings at her school. 'We have sewing every Friday afternoon. We are making needle books now.' She asks 'what is in your thumb but not in your hand; in the mountain, but not in the land?'

Hattie, Maud, and Robert De Witt, S., N.B., all send little letters. Hattie tells about the baby sister, Maud speaks of their pony, Jennie, and Robert says 'We had a lot of snow here, but it did not amount to much.' Well, winter will come in earnest soon, Robert.

Edith A. Watts, G. T., P.E.I., writes 'We have lots of fun now snowballing.' Has the snow disappointed you as it did Robert, Edith?

Julia J. MacEachern, R. P., P.E.I., says 'I live near the Northumberland Strait and we can see all the vessels and steamboats go down the strait.'

'Biddie,' Cornwall, Ont., sends in this riddle in three parts: (a) Of Mr. Bigger, Mrs. Bigger, and Baby Bigger, which is the bigger? (b) Mr. Bigger dies. Who is the bigger? (c) Mrs. Bigger marries Mr. Bigger's brother. Who is the bigger? Your suggestion, 'Biddie,' would take too large a slice out of our correspondence space if kept up regularly, but on occasion we have done what you suggest and may often do it again.

Lily Boles, Winnipeg, asks how to become a member of the Royal League of Kindness. The answer to your question, Lily, is given in R. L. K. column to-day.

We have also received little letters from Ruth Elliot, G.R., who enjoys reading about Dr. Grenfell's work, and from Ethel Smith, Winnipeg, one of our new members for the Royal League of Kindness.

—Jamaica 'Times.'

(By Margaret Deland.)

At the break of Christmas Day,
  Through the frosty starlight ringing,
Faint and sweet and far away
  Comes the sound of children, singing,
Chanting, singing.
  'Cease to mourn,
  For Christ is born,
Peace and joy to all men bringing!'

Careless that the chill winds blow,
  Growing stronger, sweeter, clearer,
Noiseless foot-falls in the snow
  Bring the happy voices nearer.
Hear them singing,
  'Winter's drear,
  But Christ is here,
Mirth and gladness with Him bringing!'

'Merry Christmas!' hear them say,
  As the East is growing lighter:
'May the joy of Christmas Day
  Make your whole year gladder, brighter!'
Join their singing,
  'To each home
  Our Christ has come,
All Love's treasures with him bringing!'

'Twins' and 'Twins.'

(Mrs. W. S. Farley, in the 'Observer,' New York.)

One couldn't see much from the small window near which the twin boys, Ralph and Chester Warren, were sitting as the short winter's day was closing. There was one thing, however, that they saw altogether too much of—the 'elevated' train. They often wished that they would never see it again. They wished, too, that they would never hear it again—never. But 'wishes' were very common things with the twins. I think they 'wished' every day of their lives; it was a sort of pastime with them, shut in, as they were, most of the time while their mother was away at work. But it seemed as if their wishes never came true.

This day, on which I introduce them to you, Christmas was near at hand. 'Christmas was in the air,' as some one said. The wishes of the twins flew about like birds in summer time.

'I wish,' said Ralph, 'that Santa Claus could find his way up here.'

'So do I,' chimed in Chester, 'I wish he'd bring us something real nice—something to play with or a book full of pictures, or a game. What would you like best?'

'Oh! oh! I hardly know what I'd like best, 'cause I guess I'd like most anything Santa Claus would bring. But, I think, maybe if I could really choose just what I've longed for most it would be a big book full of stories and pictures.' Poor little Ralph was a cripple and, as he had to spend most of his days sitting still, it was no wonder that his choice was a book.

'I'd like a livery stable,' cried out Chester; 'oh, wouldn't it be fun if I could have one like Tim Brown's, with some cunning little horses and a man to take care of them. I wish we could have a Christmas tree, too—a real tree, with bags of candy and oranges on it—don't you?'

'Guess I do.'

'And I wish Santa Claus would come and bring a new dress and hang it on the tree for mother. I guess she'd laugh if she had a real new one.'

'I never heard mother laugh, did you?' a sober look coming over the small face.

'No, I never heard her really laugh, but I'd like to.' Thus the boys talked until the small clock on the mantel pointed to five. Then came the principal event of the day—for them—the 'getting of supper.' They were only eight years old, but they knew how to do many useful things, among these being the 'getting of supper,' which was not an elaborate affair, but varied according to the state of their larder. They always had supper ready for mother's home-coming whenever she was out at day's work.

The material for supper that night was as follows: Part of a loaf of stale bread, one egg, one small onion, three cold boiled potatoes, a small piece of cold meat and a coffee cup of milk. There was, also, a very small quantity of tea in the canister, a little butter and 'drippings' in a cup, and some salt. This was really all. What kind of a supper could you have evolved from this slim material? It would not have been anything particularly appetizing, would it? But I must tell you what these two small boys got for supper, which will prove to you that—at least in some things—they were well trained.

Ralph, the little cripple, partly supporting himself by leaning against the table, chopped fine the cold meat, the potatoes and the one onion. These he seasoned with a little butter and salt and put on the stove with a cupful of hot water to simmer down and then brown a little. It looked good, and it smelled good, and when it was ready it tasted good.

Chester's share of the material was the egg, the milk and the stale bread. He sliced the latter, as his mother had taught him, beat up the former, and heated the milk. Then he dipped the bread in the milk and afterward in the beaten egg, and fried it. His mother had a long, low pan, which she called her 'dripping-pan.' This Chester put on the stove with a little of the drippings to heat, after which he laid the slices in carefully to fry. When they were a nice brown on one side he turned them to brown on the other, the result being some nice egg toast, really worthy of a place on a better table.

When Mrs. Warren returned, weary and worn from her hard day's work, her face brightened at the greeting she received. Her old cushioned rocking chair, with its two soft pillows, had been drawn close to the table by the boys, and they seated her in it, sitting down themselves on some old straight-backed chairs on each side of her. There was no table cloth on the table—they were too poor to own one—but the small-figured oil cloth, that answered the purpose, had been washed as clean as hands could make it. The nice brown hash, egg toast and the hot tea tasted good to the hungry people, and they were thankful. The trio bent their heads. Mrs. Warren said:

'For Thy many mercies, dear Lord, make us truly thankful,' and the boys said 'Amen.'

'I wished for you boys to-day,' Mrs. Warren remarked soon after the meal was in progress.

'You have been wishing, too!' exclaimed Ralph; 'what made you wish for us?'

'To see what I saw,' was her answer. 'They're getting ready for Christmas over at Mrs. Fowler's, where I've been.'

'How, mother? What are they doing?' asked Chester, eagerly.

'Oh,' was her reply, 'it would be easier to tell what they're not doing. They're baking mince pies and fruit cake and jumbles and snow cakes, and they're cracking nuts and making candy and lots of other things.'

'What are they doing all those things for?' questioned Ralph, with longing in his voice. 'Are they getting ready for Christmas? Is Santa Claus coming there? Are there any boys at Mrs. Fowler's?'

'What a lot of questions!' his mother said, smiling into the eager face, 'but I'll answer them all. Yes, that's what they're doing—getting ready for Christmas. Santa Claus is coming there. Yes, there are boys there, two of them, twins like you, but older. Now, I've said yes to all your questions, and I've some to ask you. What have you boys been doing all day? And how has my little Ralph felt?' looking earnestly into the pale face of the crippled child.

'I've felt pretty well, mother,' answered the latter. 'We cut some of your carpet rags, and we had a good time wishing—Chester and I.'

'Ralph and I,' put in Chester, 'have been wishing for Santa Claus.'

'Don't you think, mother?' longingly, 'that maybe he'll come here this year?'—this from Ralph.

She smoothed his hair, which was curly and of a beautiful golden brown, looking at him wistfully.

'I wish he would,' she said, 'and I wish, too, that he'd give you and Chester what you want most, but——' She hesitated, not wanting to blast their faint hopes in regard to even the possibility of Santa Claus coming, and yet fearing that—as usual—he would pass them by. Fortunately the boys did not notice that her sentence was unfinished, being much interested in wondering what would come of their wishes.

'I wished for a big book full of pictures and stories,' said Ralph, 'so that when I get real tired with the pain in my legs I could read and maybe forget that they hurt so.'

'And I wished,' observed Chester, 'for a cute little livery stable, mother, like Tim Brown's—you know—with horses and a coach and driver and all. And we both wished for a beautiful new dress for you, mother.'

'So we did,' said Ralph, a glow coming into his face with the delightful thought of

his poor hard-worked mother really having a beautiful new dress. He had no remembrance of ever having seen her in anything but an old one—often a patched one.

'Thank you both for your good wishes for me,' Mrs. Warren said, 'but,' and she smiled rather wistfully.

'If wishes were horses,
Beggars might ride.'

The twins laughed.

'If they were horses,' said Ralph, 'wouldn't it be fun to be riding all over creation?'

'Seems to me,' observed Chester, 'it would be funnier to see all the beggars riding.' While they were thus talking Mrs. Warren was unpacking a basket she had brought with her. She took out a small strip of bacon, a half dozen eggs, and some rolls.

'You boys cooked such a nice supper out of the odds and ends,' she said, 'that I'm going to cook you a nice breakfast to-morrow morning, bacon, eggs and fresh rolls. Won't they taste good? We will each have an egg.'

'Oh!' cried out Ralph, 'I love eggs.'

'So do I,' put in Chester, 'and I love bacon, too. Can't we have a little bacon with our eggs?' Mrs Warren smiled indulgently.

'Indeed you can,' she said, 'you can each have two thin slices of bacon and a roll.'

She was very poor and very tired, but she felt richer just that minute and less tired, too, to be conscious of the fact that she was able to promise her boys a good breakfast. There were many days when she was not able to do so. She was engaged to help at the Fowlers again the next day. Before she went out she said to the twins:

'Mrs. Fowler gave me a package of papers yesterday—you'll find them on the bureau. Perhaps you'll find something to interest you. You can cut out the pictures if you want to.' The boys always washed and wiped the breakfast dishes when their mother was out at work. This they did now and tidied the couple of small rooms they called home, after which they played for an hour or more, and then sat down near the window to watch the noisy 'elevated' rush by. Sometimes—when it did—they closed their eyes and held their hands over their ears. Ralph often held his head. When the clock pointed to eleven he always laid down on an old lounge to 'rest his legs' and 'take a nap,' such being his mother's orders. He could not always 'take a nap' for—in that tiresome place of many noises—sleep often evaded him, try as he would to woo it. But he 'rested his legs,' anyway, for the old lounge was comfortable and had some soft pillows. Chester always 'fixed the pillows just right,' he said, 'under his head' and 'under his lamest leg.' Then after Ralph was 'fixed' it was Chester's rule to go down a flight of stairs to Mrs. Ryan's room and stay there during the hour while the crippled child rested. He did not go there to play, oh, no! Mrs. Ryan worked in a restaurant every day from eleven until twelve, and while she was gone Chester watched 'the childer' (as Mrs. Ryan would have told you), aged, respectively, two, four and six years, 'kapin' 'em more continted than if I was there my own self.'

She gave him ten cents for each and every hour he served her—sometimes, in a spasm of generosity, giving him an extra cent or two or three, sometimes even five. The money he thus earned he gave his mother to 'help along,' he said. This was one of the days that poor little lame Ralph could not get asleep, but he 'rested his legs,' and while resting them he was 'wishing,' this time not for his mother nor his brother, nor for himself, but for the little Ryans. He had no money, not even a cent, to buy anything, but he had the Christmas spirit, consequently, longed to do 'what he could.'

'Mother'll know I'd buy her something real nice if I could,' he told himself with an involuntary sigh, 'and so'll Chester know I'd give him something if I had anything he'd like. But I haven't, and that's all there is of it. But, maybe Chester and I can fix up our old playthings for the Ryans, and I wonder if we couldn't somehow make a picture book for little Elsie Ryan. She's going to be lame all her life—just like I am. Poor little girl!'

It was a most touching sight to see those poor little twin boys that afternoon working industriously and happily for the Ryan babies. And really the long afternoon seemed short to them. When the clock pointed to five—time to 'get tea for mother'—they had accomplished considerable. They had owned between them for years a big linen picture book, which, naturally, was much the worse for wear. They had, however, made a new picture book of it, at least the little Ryans would think so. They had cut out a lot of pictures from the papers their mother had given them, made some paste and pasted them in the old book until it took on a new radiance. They had mended up their few broken toys until they looked quite presentable, and when their mother came home they looked so happy that she asked them what had happened.

* * * * * * * *

The Fowler twins, Frank and Paul, were large and strong for their age—fifteen years. They were as full of life and fun as a good nut is of meat. They were good-hearted, too, and quite popular in the circle in which they moved, but I must confess that they were not enthused over the prospect of getting a Christmas tree.

'Boys,' said Mrs. Fowler two days before Christmas, 'it's high time for you to get your Christmas tree. Why don't you go after it?'

The boys looked at each other and laughed, then Frank said:

'You see, it's got to be an old story, mother,' and Paul observed, 'Ancient history, you know, mother.'

'Probably you know what you're talking about, but I don't,' their mother said, regarding them questionably. 'Your subject can't be Christmas trees.'

'That's it exactly,' declared Paul. 'Nothing new in them under the sun,' asserted Frank. 'We've had a Christmas tree every year since we can remember, and a lot of things on it for us, including oranges, sugar plums and one thing and another, just as if we were a lot of kids instead of being two strapping boys, fifteen years old and past.'

'Now, mother,' put in Paul, 'if you know of any boys who've never had a Christmas tree, it would pay to get one for them.'

'Well,' said their mother, feeling somewhat injured at this new attitude of her boys, 'of course, if you are really and truly tired of Christmas trees, you needn't get one. I'm sure I don't want you to get one for my sake,' with a grim smile.

'But, mother,' observed Paul, throwing one arm about her in a loving caress, 'you know Frank and I would get a tree if it were to be filled for you before you could say Jack Robinson.'

'I don't crave a tree for my own self,' was her laughing rejoinder.

'Can't you have the tree for some boys who've never had one? That would be jolly—you know—and we'd have great fun,' said Paul.

As Paul said this his glance happened to take in Mrs. Warren, who was rubbing up some brasswork on an old-fashioned desk. She was not looking at him, but, to his surprise, he saw her face suddenly flush and then pale. Paul was a most observant boy.

'Mrs. Warren,' he said in his genial way, 'do you know of any kids who've never had a Christmas tree?' She seemed unable to answer at first; meanwhile polishing the brasswork with renewed energy.

'Mrs. Warren,' Paul repeated, thinking that she may not have heard him, 'do you know of any kids who've never had a Christmas tree?'

'Yes,' she said, with a smile that seemed somewhat troubled, 'if you mean boys when you say "kids."'

'Oh,' cried out Paul, 'I believe they're your own. Tell us about them, do. What are their names? And how old are they?'

'They are my own,' was her quiet answer. 'Their names are Ralph and Chester Warren, and they're eight years old.'

'Twins!' exclaimed Frank. 'My! But aren't we in luck to find another pair of twins to take our place? You'll be happy now, mother, won't you?'

'So, after all, mother, dear, you'll have twins to get up a tree for,' laughed Paul.

There was no reluctance now in regard to getting the tree. The boys went off in great glee tree-hunting, finding, to their satisfaction, a beautiful one, which they carried home and set up that afternoon. They now seemed more anxious than their mother had been to begin the decorating. They obtained permis-

SANTA AS LECTURER.

(By L. J. Bridgman.)

'In this diagram, gentlemen and ladies, you will find some Christmas gifts drawn each in a size proportionate to the joy generally shown by the recipient. Observe the cost marks and relative sizes, please.'—The 'C. E. World.'

sion to accompany Mrs. Warren home at half-past five.

'We want to interview those other twins—you know—mother,' they said, and when they climbed up the long stairs and saw and heard everything there was to see and hear, they 'felt like howling,' they told each other in secret. The pale little cripple with his sweet and patient smile! The stronger twin, with his cheering, helpful ways! The devotion of them both to their hard-working mother, which was seen by the greeting they gave her and by the supper they had prepared and kept hot for her home-coming!

The barren room! The noisy 'elevated' rushing by the window! The absence of the many luxuries that they had always been accustomed to! The gloom and the closeness! The 'shut-in' feeling of being out of the world, as it were! The sudden realization of the meaning of poverty!

Each and all of these told a new and most touching story to the Fowler twins, aged fifteen. They were healthy, hearty, genial fellows, full of life and fun, and very popular with their boy friends. But they felt rather serious after staying fifteen minutes with the Warren twins. Something seemed to be choking them as they groped their way down the old, dark, creaky stairway. Something seemed to be dimming their eyes and laying a pressure on their hearts. But, suddenly, as they emerged on the street, where a street lamp threw a light upon them, they looked at each other, smiled rather wistfully, and grasped hands.

'After all,' said Paul, rubbing his wet eyes with his handkerchief and making a comical grimace, 'there'll be no need of our howling over things as they are with the other twins. We'll just be thinking of things as they will be. Christmas is most here, and then—and then——'

'It will be worth while to watch the gladness in the faces of those little eight-year-old twins,' interrupted Frank. 'Hip! hip! hurrah!'

* * * * * * *

Oh, the joy of it! It was, indeed, 'worth while' to watch the gladness of the eight-year-old twins on that Christmas eve. And it was worth while, too, to watch the gladness on the faces of the fifteen-year-old twins.

First had come the invitation from 'six until nine,' which set the Warren twins almost wild with wonder and delight. Their mother was home at noon that day, having half a day off. She knew the great joy in store for her boys, but kept her own counsel, as she had been requested to do by the Fowler twins. To all their many excited questions she was non-committal, but there was a new light in her face that her small sons could not define.

'Will we see Santa Claus, mother?' asked Ralph.

'Wait and see,' was all she said.

* * * * * * *

But six o'clock came at last. Mrs. Warren and her boys were at Mrs. Fowler's promptly, and were ushered into the front parlor by the Fowler twins, whose handsome faces were fairly radiant with joy. A colored man distributed some small tables about the room, putting a white cloth, sprinkled with holly, on each. Next came refreshments.

Oh, but it was a 'red-letter' day to the Warrens! I cannot tell you all the details; it would occupy too much room, but I will give you some idea of how things were. To begin with—such a delicious supper as the Warrens had never had before—nor even heard of, beginning with turkey sandwiches and ending with some shiny mottoes that snapped like a pistol and there was a tissue paper cap. And all the time they were eating a 'talkophone' was making such lovely music that it seemed as if it must come from some other world—'way up in the blue sky somewhere,' Ralph thought.

Then, later, the sliding doors into another room rolled back, and there stood a wonderful Christmas tree, aglow with lights, with Santa Claus capering about. Every moment between six and nine was filled with joy. Santa Claus fairly loaded down the eight-year-old twins with gifts. Chester's wished-for 'livery stable' with horses and coach 'like Tim Brown's' (but three times as large and six times finer) was there, so was Ralph's 'big book full of pictures and stories,' but grander by far than that of his imagination. Indeed, there were all sorts of delightful gifts, mechanical toys and ships, games, panoramas, and there were warm new suits, shoes and caps. For the mother there was the 'beautiful new dress,' the warm shawl and a Christmas letter, which told her that she was to have three cozy and comfortable rooms 'rent free' in a building owned by the Fowlers, where no 'elevated' could or would trouble them, and where they would be near a good school, where even the little cripple could go and be safe. It all seemed like a dream, a beautiful dream.

As the Warrens went home they heard sweet voices from a church choir singing,

'Peace on earth,
Good will to men.'

'Oh,' cried out one twin, 'I'm so happy don't know what to do.'

'So am I,' responded the other.

'So am I,' echoed the mother.

Meanwhile, the Fowler twins were saying:

Paul, as he danced about the gay parlors, 'This is the happiest Christmas eve I've ever known,' and Frank, who met his brother halfway around the circuit, 'Then's my sentiments, old fellow!'

Their mother heard them and smiled. 'It is a good while since I have had such a happy one,' she said. 'I'm glad to have found out that there are other twins in the world besides my own.'

'GOOD MORNING, DR. SANTA CLAUS,' 'WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS!'

Mr. Van Gelt's Case.

A Christmas Story.

(William O. Stoddard, in the 'Junior Eagle,' Brooklyn.)

'Christmas?' remarked the very fine man, as he glanced scornfully at the crowds of common people that were staring through the windows.

In another moment he said it again, and added:

'Day before Christmas!' for he was jostled unpleasantly by the stream of gift buyers that were pouring in and out of the shops.

'Bitter cold!' he remarked once more, 'but I shouldn't know whether it was cold or hot if it were not for the thermometer. Something's the matter with me. I must find out what it is. I'll go and see that doctor, what's-his-name, the specialist in finding out what's the matter with people. Don't care what he charges. Somewhere along here. Ah, there's a sign——'

'Looking for me, sir? Going in to see me? Go right in. Time you did. I noticed you as you came down the avenue. I saw that you were one of my patients. Walk in. I've been out among them all the morning. Such an immense practice.'

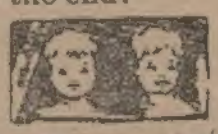
'Such loads of apparatus!' exclaimed Mr. Van Gelt. 'Costliest kind!'

'That's what it is,' replied the doctor. 'If

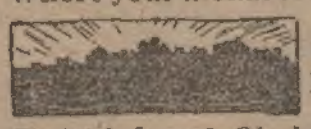
Travelers Three.

Whither, travelers, do ye fare,
Thro' the solemn midnight air?
Rome is many a league away,
Many a toilsome night and day,—
Ere her palaces arise
On your longing, wondering eyes,
Ere great Cæsar's glory blaze
On your rapt, adoring gaze
Tempt no more the fearsome night.
Tarry till the morning light.

Not to conquering Cæsar's Rome,
Journey we from kith and home,
Than his sceptre, mightier far,
Him we seek, whose Herald Star
Shining long in prophecy,
Gladdens now the eastern sky.
God, who doth His Herald send,
He will guide us to the end!



Will ye say, O travelers three,
Where your monarch's throne may be?



Wheresoe'er night follows morn,
Lo! the promised Christ is born!

Christ is born? Oh, blest are ye
At His feet to bow the knee!
Haste, oh, haste ye to your goal.
Bear the worship of my soul,
Haste, His beauty to adore,
Haste, and tarry nevermore!

Over desert's burning sands,
Mountain steep and weary lands,—
Cheered by Faith's deep mystery,
Onward sped the travelers three—
Till they knelt in holy joy
Low, before the Virgin's Boy!
Not the manger's stolid kine
Saw they, but the Love Divine,—
Word incarnate, Truth and Grace,
In the silent infant Face!
Spirit-led and cheered, may we
In our earthly manger see
Not its sordid, soulless cares,
Not the grossness that it wears,
But the Peace and Beauty born
Of the first glad Christmas Morn!

ZITELLA COCKE.

—'Youth's Companion.'

It wasn't for this I could not hear from my patients nor treat them without going to see them. Some seasons I have to go. Specially at this season. Terrible hard work. Glad you came right here. Difficult case. I'm almost afraid I can't reach you. Sit down there, sir,' he commanded sternly, pointing to a large arm chair near a heavy table.

Mr. Van Gelt sat down. The doctor's face, all of it above his white beard and moustache, and under his fur cap, grew redder and almost angry. He was just tall enough to press his ear against Mr. Van Gelt's side and listen.

'I thought so!' he exclaimed, savagely. 'Take those in your hands. I'll bring your heart right out and you can see for yourself.'

They were just such battery handles as might belong to any electric machine, but Mr. Van Gelt had something strange to look at and felt very queer.

'I'm kind of empty,' he remarked. 'What's that on the table? Is it my heart?'

The doctor picked up a hammer and rapped smartly upon the thing that lay on the table. It did not ring, but there was a leaden thud. Then he asked:

'Do you feel anything?'

'Sort o' startled, that's all,' replied Mr. Van Gelt.

The doctor took the tongs and lifted a large, white-hot coal from the grate and laid it carefully upon the heart on the table, remarking: 'Grip tight, now. I've turned on all the lightning. How do you feel?

'A sensation of warmth, almost,' said Mr. Van Gelt. 'Now you know the trouble is with my heart——'

'Sit still!' roared the doctor. 'You've come for treatment, and you're going to have it!' He wheeled the chair up to the photoscope. At the same time he whirled two slender side-arms with large, metal plate things at their ends, up to the very sides of Mr. Van Gelt's head.

'Look!' said the doctor. 'Look till you see something. Listen, too.'

Mr. Van Gelt seemed to hear, first, a kind of buzz behind him, in the room, but he could not have turned his head if he wished to, and he leaned forward and put his eyes against the goggles of the photoscope.

'I see something!' he exclaimed. 'She is awfully ragged. Shivers, too, and so does the little girl. No use for them to look in at the window. Hark!'

Anybody in that room could have heard, perhaps, as well as Mr. Van Gelt's left ear did, the childish voice that said:

'O, mother! Aren't they beautiful? Don't I wish I had some! I never did.'

Then a low, sad voice poured into his right ear and into the room:

'No, Nelly; you never will. We had better wish for something to eat. Oh! what a Christmas ours will be.'

'I see,' said Mr. Van Gelt. How suddenly this thing changes. What do they crowd around a stove for, when there is no fire in it? Six of them, beside the father and mother. She is hugging the baby——'

The left ear telephone worked first. Then he heard a small boy say:

'Snug up close, Sis. If we don't keep close together we shall freeze. I wish we had furs, like Santa Claus.'

The buzz in the room was really getting exciting, and Mr. Van Gelt even tried to put his hands to his ears, just as the doctor asked him:

'How do you feel now? Have you any particular sensation?'

'Yes, I have,' said Mr. Van Gelt. 'I have a strange feeling, as if I would like to do some counting.'

'I will let you out for a minute or so, then,' said the doctor. 'I think it is safe. Let me see you count.'

Mr. Van Gelt began to feel in his pockets and take out the change.

The coppers and the nickels came first, and he counted them as they came. It was slow work, but as fast as he counted anything it suddenly disappeared.

A weary, hungry kind of wail came feebly into the room from the telephone.

'There,' said Mr. Van Gelt, 'I heard that before;' and now he counted quite a lot of silver pieces, but even some new dollars went out of sight, and Mr. Van Gelt was looking around the room as if to see what had become of them, when a sobbing voice from the right telephone seemed to say:

'Mother, won't he come at all?'

'Ah! My pocketbook,' said Mr. Van Gelt, and he began counting again.

There were many bills in that pocketbook when he began, but just as he spread out the last one he discovered that there were none left on the table.

'Where are they?' he gasped. 'I'm sure I counted correctly. I always do. It's all the money I had with me. Doctor?'

'Look,' commanded the doctor. 'There is something to see this time. All my reports are coming in.

Mr. Van Gelt was looking. He was shuddering, too, and his face was puckered into wrinkles by the feeling in his mouth.

'I see them!' he exclaimed. 'Oh, oh! What a pity! I might have helped them and I did not——'

'How do you feel now?' asked the doctor, pulling back the chair.

'Feel?' said Mr. Van Gelt. 'I don't want to hear any more. I want to go right out and do something. Just hear those things that are coming in! There isn't any time to lose. Come on!'

'Hurrah!' shouted the doctor. 'You can hear them without any machine. You'll do first rate. But you can't go out in that rig. Put this on.'

The fur cap and the furry overcoat and a load of things to carry changed Mr. Van Gelt a great deal, but he was too tall and too thin, and he had no long, white beard. He was not anywhere nearly so fine looking a man as was the doctor.

Every telephone in the room seemed to be working at high pressure and Mr. Van Gelt was getting nervous.

Out they went, and it seemed as if they looked more and more alike every moment.

Late, late, nobody knew how late, the door opened again, and it was almost as if two doctors come in; but one of them said:

'Sit right down, Mr. Van Gelt.'

'I feel so warm,' said the patient, 'and so good, and I am so tired.'

Then there was a long silence, and the room would have been dark if it had not seemed to be smiling to itself in a wonderful kind of starlight.

Mr. Van Gelt slept soundly in the great high-back chair before the photoscope. At last he was startled by a grip of a hand on his shoulder, and a loud, cheery voice shouted in his ear. 'Wish you Merry Christmas!'

It was as if a thousand echos poured into the room and the doctor exclaimed:

'Look! Listen! Sit there till breakfast time. Do you more good——'

Mr. Van Gelt laughed till he cried.

'See them? Hear them? Only listen to

those children! Hear the children!'

'Nothing the matter with you now,' said the doctor. I can cure any man when he gets so he can hear children laugh in other houses besides his own.'

'Ah! said Mr. Van Gelt, 'this is great treatment of yours. Dr. Santa Claus——'

But the room was just then too full of the voices of children for anything else to be heard, excepting part of the doctor's reply.

Christmas Cheer.

Hang up the children's stockings,
And ring the happy chimes,
For peace and love shall reign on earth
In merry Christmas time—
Mementos of that other morn,
In Bethlehem where Christ was born.
Some homes in every nation,
In city or in town,
Still keep the dear old customs
The past has handed down,
And celebrate them year by year,
As Christmas crowns the world with cheer.

In English homes, 'neath mistletoe,
They sing the Christmas song,
While o'er the yule-log's rugged side
The bright flames creep along,
And scarlet Holly berries glow
Among the green boughs bending low.
We decorate the branches
Of Christmas trees with cheer.
An emblem of thanksgiving
For all the fruitful year.
And Santa Claus brings dolls and drums,
To glad expectant little ones.
Oh, day the best and dearest
Of all the seasons bring,
The hope of every Christian's heart,
The birthday of our King;
The one glad day of joy and mirth,
When God's best gift was sent to earth.

—'Waif.

The First Christmas Tree.

Faith, Hope and Love Lighted it.

(Jacob A. Riis's 'Yule-Tide in the Old Town' in the Christmas 'Century.'

When Ansgarius preached the White Christ to the vikings of the North, so runs the legend of the Christmas-tree, the Lord sent his three messengers, Faith, Hope, and Love, to help light the first tree. Seeking one that should be high as hope, wide as love, and that bore the sign of the cross on every bough, they chose the balsam fir, which best of all the trees in the forest met the requirements. Perhaps that is a good reason why there clings about the Christmas tree that which has preserved it from being swept along in the flood of senseless luxury that has swamped so many things in our money-mad day. Every time I see a tree studded with electric lights, garlands of tinsel gold festooning every branch, and hung with the hundred costly knickknacks the storekeepers invent year by year 'to make trade,' until the tree itself disappears entirely under its burden, I have a feeling that a fraud has been practiced on the kindly spirit of Yule.

Wax candles are the only real thing for a Christmas tree, candles of wax that mingle their perfume with that of the burning fir, not the by-product of some coal-oil or other abomination. What if the boughs do catch fire? They can be watched, and too many candles are tawdry, anyhow. Also, red apples, oranges and old-fashioned cornucopias made of colored paper, and made at home, look a hundred times better and fitter in the green; and so do drums and toy trumpets and wald-horns, and a rocking horse reined up in front that need not have cost forty dollars, or anything like it.

Gift Angels.

(Amos R. Wells, in the 'Zion's Herald.')

One 24th of December, dozing by my study fire, a wonderful change seemed suddenly to come to me, and I appeared to be walking home over a high hill. This was a very beautiful hill, right above the centre of the earth, and gift angels before setting out on their Christmas errands seemed to meet there; the hill was crowded with hosts of them.

What are gift angels? The little sprites that go along with all presents, and while the giver carries the gift, 'they carry' the happiness! Have you never wondered how both always come together? And in my sleep it seemed that the gift angels met on this beautiful hill to be assigned to different gifts and receive the loads of happiness which were to go along with them.

As I came up on that Christmas Eve they were just dispersing on their errands—clouds of shining white angels floating swiftly off in all directions from the hill. First I met a gay group of them, all dancing and singing with joy, and asked them why they went together.

'We go with a load of coal to poor old Charity West,' said they, 'and it needs all of us to carry so much happiness!'

Then I noticed an angel who seemed to move reluctantly and with a disappointed air. He was not shining, either, or singing like the rest, and I asked him why.

'Because I must go with a diamond necklace,' answered he.

'Why, you should sparkle all over on such an errand!' I exclaimed.

'No, no! For it is sent by one rich woman to another whom she does not like, and sent only to repay an obligation!'

'Have you any happiness at all to carry with such a gift?'

'A very little,' he sighed, 'but I must make the most of it!'

Next came dancing toward me a second group, fully as large as the first—some two dozen of them.

'We all go with one little present!' they shouted gayly to me.

'What is it?' I asked.

'A penwiper, which a little girl made for her father, and no one but us knows of it! And there's happiness enough to load 'em all!'

'What can such a very wee angel as this be doing?' thought I, as an exceedingly small sprite came toward me, and so I asked him.

'I go with a piano,' the little one answered.

'Surely you can't carry it!' I cried in surprise.

'Hardly the piano!' he laughed. 'but all the happiness makes a light load, for a rich father is giving it carelessly to his daughter, and she will be angry because it is not as good as the one her friend has.'

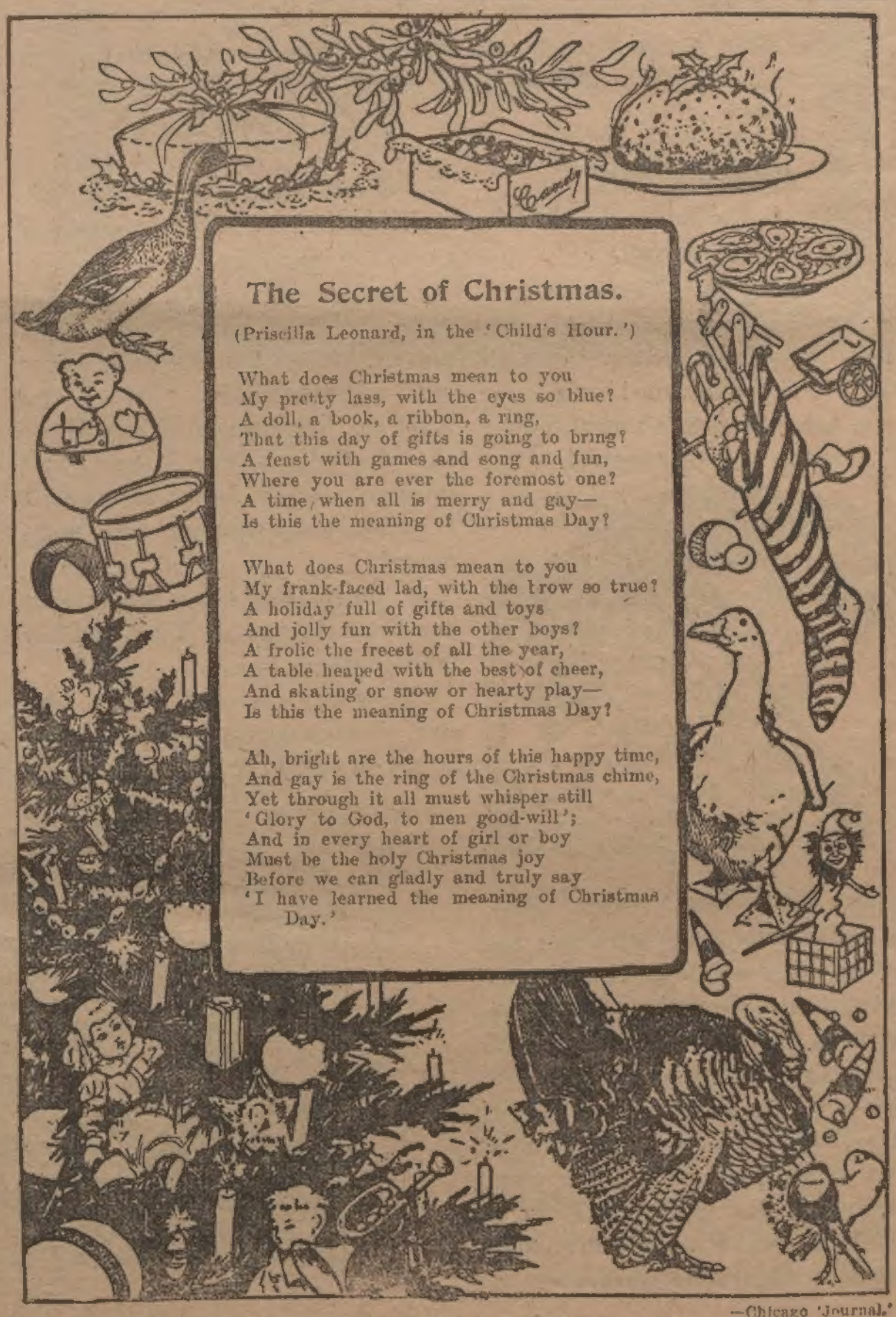
I admired especially a very dainty being whom I saw approaching, by far the most exquisite of all in form and face. Wondering for what errand he was selected, I inquired.

'To go with a rough dry-goods box,' he replied, 'which a father has fitted up himself, to be his little daughter's doll house. Ah, how elegant she will think it!'

Strangely enough this lovely being was followed by one who seemed as careless and negligent as it is possible for these beautiful sprites to look, and his errand was a similar one!

'But the doll house with which I am to go "is" an elegant one, bought at a fine store, with so many other presents that the child will hardly look at it. I carry so little happiness that I am ashamed of myself!'

By this time the hill was deserted, and as a log falling down in my grate chused me to stir, I fell to wondering what sort of angels would accompany the presents I intended to make on the morrow.



The Secret of Christmas.

(Priscilla Leonard, in the 'Child's Hour.')

What does Christmas mean to you
My pretty lass, with the eyes so blue?
A doll, a book, a ribbon, a ring,
That this day of gifts is going to bring?
A feast with games and song and fun,
Where you are ever the foremost one?
A time when all is merry and gay—
Is this the meaning of Christmas Day?

What does Christmas mean to you
My frank-faced lad, with the brow so true?
A holiday full of gifts and toys
And jolly fun with the other boys?
A frolic the freest of all the year,
A table heaped with the best of cheer,
And skating or snow or hearty play—
Is this the meaning of Christmas Day?

Ah, bright are the hours of this happy time,
And gay is the ring of the Christmas chime,
Yet through it all must whisper still
'Glory to God, to men good-will';
And in every heart of girl or boy
Must be the holy Christmas joy
Before we can gladly and truly say
'I have learned the meaning of Christmas Day.'

—Chicago 'Journal.'

LITTLE FOLKS

—'Globe and Commercial Advertiser,' N.Y.

The Night Before Christmas.

They were going to stay awake and see who filled those long stockings they had borrowed from big brother Tom, and then somehow they saw a tree grow up in the middle of the nursery floor and the snowy little field beneath it instead of the nursery rug, and such numbers of things in it and around. Every thing they had ever told each other they wanted was there and candles and apples and——— Oh! Was it! Could it be Santy himself over them! They could just see him through the branches of the wonderful tree and he was filling those long stockings with such knobby things.

Then wee Mary turned over and Ted sat up and would you believe it? It was grey dawn and mother was saying 'Put on your slippers dears!' And there was no tree, but Mary and Ted are sure it was there 'Cause, Daddy we saw it and besides here are the knobby parcels we saw him put in our stockings—and — look at mine, mother! and mine, Oh! '

Then there was such fun in the big bed where mother tucked them in to open the parcels, and the things in them were far better than the wish ones for these were real!

Mildred's Gift.

(By Mary C. Callan, in the 'Youths Companion'.)

The 'Busy Bees' came swarming out through the parsonage gate. 'How lovely that we have enough ready to fill it in time!' cried one little bee. She was not thinking of a hive, but of a barrel. For

VIOLET.

these 'Busy Bees' were, after all, only little girls who met together every week to learn to do useful things. For a long time they had been making warm garments, under the guidance of the minister's wife. The fruit of their labors, with whatever gleanings they could spare from their own wardrobes, was to be packed in a barrel the next time they met, and sent as a Christmas remembrance to a charitable society in the city.

Mildred ran into the house and up to the play-room.

'And there is not a single doll going in that barrel,' she murmured. Then her face grew grave with a great resolve. 'One of you must go, my dears,' she said, as she looked at her largest and loveliest, Violet. 'It seems as if I couldn't let you go,' she murmured.

A minute later she was sitting in her little chair with Violet on her lap, singing a lullaby.

'Now my precious Violet,' she said, 'I have decided to trust you to be my messenger, to carry Christmas happiness to some little girl who has no one to love.'

And that is how Violet went to the city in the Christmas barrel.

Even into the wards of the children's hospital the Christmas feeling had crept. Little faces, saddened by suffering, brightened as the spicy green trimmings were hung about the walls, in preparation for the day. But in a quiet corner the house physician looked down gravely at a still little figure on one of the cots.

'There is no reason why she should not have a satisfactory recovery,' he said. 'This operation has proved very successful.' She

could soon walk and run about, but it seems impossible to rouse her.'

Just then the nurse opened a Christmas box and lifted out Mildred's doll.

The doctor quickly took the doll, laid it on the pillow close to the child's face, and stepped aside. She opened her eyes and gazed at Violet as if still seeing dreams. A light of joy and wonder leaped to her eyes. She drew Violet to her heart, feeling with eager fingers the soft fluff of yellow hair and the rustling silkiness of the dress. As she caught sight of the doctor and nurse she held her breath in a sudden fear that her treasure would be claimed by some one. But she read a promise in their faces.

'How do you like your doll?' asked the doctor, in an easy tone.

'Is this my doll?' The wonder in the child's voice told how barren her life had been.

As the happy light again set her eyes shining the doctor whispered, 'She will live.'

Day by day she grew stronger, and so Mildred's little Christmas messenger, having given her message of joy and hope, lay in peaceful doll sleep in her new mother's arms.

STARS.

The golden glow is paling between the cloudy bars;
I'm watching in the twilight to see the little stars.
I wish that they would sing to-night their song of long ago:
If we were only nearer them, what might we see and know!

Are they the eyes of angels that always wake to keep
A loving watch above us, while we are fast asleep?
Or are they lamps that God has lit from His own glorious light,
To guide the little children's souls whom He will call to-night?

We hardly see them twinkle in any summer night,
But in the winter evenings they sparkle clear and bright.
Is this to tell the little ones, so hungry, cold, and sad,
That there's a shining home for them, where all is warm and glad?

More beautiful and glorious, and never cold or far,
Is He who always loves them, the Bright and Morning Star.
I wish those little children knew that holy, happy light!
Lord Jesus, shine on them, I pray, and make them glad to-night.

—'Friendly Greetings.'

A Sermon in Verse

(By Helen Elizabeth Coolidge.)

Little children, wherefore
Are ye glad to-day?
What the joyful tidings
That we blithesome play?
Hearken with the shepherds
To celestial strain,
See the glory brightening
The Judean plain!

Little children, listen!
We are glad to-day
And our joyous echo
Need not die away,
For the holy Jesus,
In whose praise we sing,
Bids ye now to others
The good tidings bring.

Little children, ever
Glad obedience bring,
Precious above spices
To the infant King.
With the poor and lonely
Share thy Christmas cheer,
And, together, hearken
To our music clear.

—'Christian Intelligencer.'

Christmas Eve.

God bless the babies' stockings
All over the land to-night!
God bless the little children
Asleep in the hearthfire's light.

May the baby hands be helpful,
Let the baby feet tread sure,
Keep the sweet eyes meet for heaven,
And the soft lips true and pure.

God bless the babies' stockings
All over the land to-night;
God keep the little children
Asleep in the hearthfire's light.

—Selected.

..HOUSEHOLD..

The True Christmas Spirit.

(By Helena H. Thomas.)

It was but four days till Christmas, and the Yule-tide glow seemed to light up the faces of all one woman met as she went out for a little constitutional that bright morning. Peace and good will rang in talk and laughter of older passers-by, while children exchanged rapturous comments on the expected gifts of Santa Claus, and midst it all she heard:

'Say, lady, look what I've made for my papa!'

She was not long in facing about, and then saw a wee man holding aloft a pail made out of rose-colored tissue paper, and as he gazed at it he made a picture the beholder will not soon forget, as, with a look of pride on his dimpled face, in joyous tone he cried:

'Jus' think! I made it all my own self!'

'Did you say you made it for your papa?'

'Of course!'

'Why did you not make it for your mamma?' next queried the woman who loves children and likes to find what is back of their innocent prattle.

'Oh, I've giv' her such lots an' lots o' things what I've made I guess she don't want any more,' sighed the little fellow, in rueful tone, as if mamma's apparent indifference wounded his sensitive heart. 'But papa'll think it's jus' beautiful!'

'When are you going to give it to your papa?'

At that the child, with an incredulous look on his face, retorted:

'Course you know 'thout askin', lady, 'cause everybody knows 'bout Christmas.'

'Oh, it is for your papa's Christmas present, is it? I am sure he will be delighted,' was the rejoinder, as the speaker looked down at the winsome face. 'Will he use it for a water pail?'

At that the little fellow gave a toss of his head, which plainly said that he thought the questioner lacking in sense to put such a query, as he stoutly said:

'I guess not! My papa can buy water pails!'

'Then of what use will your little pail be to your papa?' persisted the woman, on purpose intent.

The boy at that took a few hurried strides forward, then came to a standstill, and, after kicking the freshly fallen snow an instant, said, in a puzzled way:

'Maybe you haven't any boy at your house, lady.'

'No, there are not any children in my home, little man. Are you sorry for me?' she replied.

'Course! But that's why you don't know how my papa'll love this, jus' 'cause Bennie made it! It's nothin' but paper, an' jus' no good. But my dear papa'll put it on the parlor mantle an' show it, like 'twas worth a million dollars, he will!'

There was at that juncture such a lump in the throat of the childless woman, as she compared this child, who was happy in the thought of giving, instead of thinking only of what he was to receive, like most little folks of her acquaintance, that she made no comment, and then she heard:

'You see, lady, I put a whole lot o' love in this one, 'cause 'twas papa's Christmas, an' he'll know it jus' as well.'

The love back of the making was so plainly written on the face of the boy, as he once more held up his kindergarten product, that from a full heart his listener cried:

'I have seen many beautiful Christmas gifts, child, but yours surpasses them all in the true Christmas spirit.'

He understood, for as their ways parted the happy boy, swinging his rose-colored pail, called back:

'Papa'll like it, anyhow!'

Then as if to impart information to the woman who had no boy to count the days, he sang out:

'One, two, three—four days, an' then he'll have it. Gee!'—'Michigan Christian Advocate.'

The Little Fellow's Stocking.

(Joe Lincoln, in the 'Saturday Evening Post.')

Oh, it's Christmas Eve, and moonlight, and the Christmas air is chill,
And the frosty Christmas holly shines and sparkles on the hill,
And the Christmas sleigh-bells jingle, and the Christmas laughter rings,
As the last stray shoppers hurry, takin' home the Christmas things;
And up yonder in the attic there's a little trundle bed
Where there's Christmas dreams a-dancin' through a sleepy curly head;
And it's 'Merry Christmas,' Mary, once agin fer me and you,
With the little feller's stockin' hangin' up against the flue.

'Tisn't silk, that little stockin', and it isn't much fer show,
And the darns are pretty plenty round about the heel and toe,
And its color kinder faded, and it's sorter worn and old,
But it really is surprisin' what a lot of love 'twill hold;
And the little hand that hung it by the chimbly there along
Has a grip upon our heartstrings that is mighty firm and strong;
So old Santy don't forgit it, though it isn't fine and new,
That plain little worsted stockin' hangin' up beside the flue.

And the crops may fail, and leave us with our plans all gone ter smash,
And the mortgage may hang heavy, and the bills use up the cash,
But whenever comes the season, jest so long's we've got a dime,
There'll be somethin' in that stockin'—won't there, Mary?—every time.
And if, in amongst our sunshine, there's a shower er two of rain,
Why, we'll face it bravely smilin', and we'll try not ter complain,
Long as Christmas comes and finds us here together, me and you,
With the little feller's stockin' hangin' up beside the flue.

The Christmas of Childhood.

(William Byron Forbush, in the 'Pilgrim.')

As we grow older and our own pleasures become vicarious, we learn to love to watch the children at their Christmas. Ours may be a deeper peace at the holy tide, but they have the greater joy. We can not, like them, so eagerly anticipate it that we go to bed dressed to be the sooner ready for its gifts, and holy days that are past often cast the shadows of our losses into the perfect winter sunshine.

We think the Christmas magazines are premature, now that they reach us sometimes before Thanksgiving Day. But Christmas to the children has begun before then. Those ecstatic secrecies which leave queer-shaped bundles in our closets and cause little handmaidens to crouch desperately over their aprons when we approach unheralded, or to abandon remnants of unfinished handicraft that were to have been Christmas presents in various byways of the house, prove that Christmas is not drawing near unnoticed.

The elements of a merry Christmas to a child that is not so unfortunate as to be rich and over-indulged, are so simple that I wonder we do not introduce them more often. The luxury of giving and the luxury of sharing, the joy of making gifts that cost time and thought and care, the emphasis of the central right of the home fireplace, the zest of expectancy, the reappearance of all the kindly domestic virtues—these are things which, repeated often enough, might well make Christmas possible among us almost every day.

Still, even to a child Christmas Day is bound to be forever unique. At other times the dark is fearsome, but on Christmas Eve it is full of angels and populated with the gentle ghosts of visiting shepherds. Babies are seen to be more directly from God on Christmas morning than at any other time, and the universe seems to children kinder because the concourse of gifts then points to a Child-Heart on God's Throne. And no matter how much we may do by our barbarous Sunday school comic-opera celebrations, I trust we can never obliterate wholly from the memory of any child the sense of the Good and Perfect Gift.

Christmas is never quite so happy as any child anticipates. The appetite will flag before the feast has failed; even candy becomes commonplace and tasteless. There is some flaw in the most cherished toy and in the flood of presents the submerged youngster often before nightfall grows world-weary. The cup of human pleasure is a small one and easily spilled. The very inadequacy of the gifts and symbols may lead the child as he grows older, with us if we have grown wiser, to think of higher ideals and holier things.

There is another side to the subject. If Christmas is childlike, may not we be childlike too? Can we get rid of the sophistication, the mercenary exchangings of gifts, the belated and hurried turmoil of buying, the making Christmas a social function, and prepare for a new year of simplicity. You remember how dear St. Francis used to place mangers in the churches, in which he laid images of the infant Jesus and around which he grouped images of the other characters of the story, so that his pleasure-loving people might come in and pause and smile again to think of the birthday at the inn. Let us put the manger again in the center of our Christmas. And may our hearts, too, become a manger in which is not a bambino but a child-Christ.

The Santa Claus Belief.

Every year there are more children and parents to whom the question of the teaching of the Santa Claus myth is a serious problem. What attitude shall grown folks take toward it? The interesting question is raised by an Illinois reader, who writes:

The following appeared in a religious weekly of my denomination:

'Is it a sin to lead children to believe in Santa Claus and his chimney ascent?

'Certainly not. "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God"; and a belief in an imaginary being such as this cannot be either logically or ethically construed as coming within the definition of sin.'

The position taken in the answer seems to me to be wrong. While it may not be sin for the child to believe in Santa Claus, yet to lead the child to believe in this imaginary being is to deceive the child. Is not this deception sin?

To lead a child to believe fully and unquestioningly in the existence of a beneficent person that does not exist has two sure results: keen disappointment, sooner or later, to the child; and a severe shaking of the child's confidence in the one who has deceived him. To cause in an innocent person, deliberately and unnecessarily, disappointment and loss of confidence, looks very much like sin. For it might well be said that this painting and unsettling of a child's mind is one way of causing a little one to stumble; and a higher authority than the Westminster Catechism suggested that it were more profitable for one who does this that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea. The Illinois correspondent keenly notes the point which the paper he quotes entirely missed, that the child's belief is not the question of sin at all, but the 'causing' a child to believe.

But must Santa Claus, with all the mystery and fun and surprise which tenfold the joy of Christmas, be done away with? Of course not. We can, and we ought to, keep Santa Claus; but we don't need to lie to do so. We are to keep him just as we keep fairies and

elves and hobgoblins. Every child enjoys all these, yet few children believe in their actual existence. And it is not necessary to tell the child, in brutal frankness, that they are only 'make-believe,' or that Santa Claus is. That 'would' spoil it all. No; children are more keenly sensitive than adults to the 'make-believe' tone, and spirit, and atmosphere; they live in it; they respond to any suggestion of it from their elders; but they need never be told that it is only 'make-believe.' Imagine explaining to a little mother of four or five, who is putting her dolly to bed for a cold, that that doll cannot have a cold because it is not alive!

This is the principle upon which the wisest parents and educators act when introducing Santa Claus to the children. Actual deception is avoided by tone and look, not by an explanation. Then there is no heart-burning of disappointment nor shattered confidence in father's and mother's word for the child as he grows out of Santa Claus' realm. For Santa Claus never ought to be outgrown.—Sunday School 'Times.'

Holiday Gifts.

Of course that's what all the young folks are thinking of just now, and many of the old folks, too, and lots of our 'Messenger' readers are thinking on the subject very hard, indeed—not wondering what they are going to get at all, but wondering what they can give. For there after all comes the true Christmas joy.

We offer help to hundreds of boys and girls in Canada to solve their problem, in that we supply gifts that will be fine for father, mother, brothers or sisters, all to be earned by selling a few copies of the Christmas 'Pictorial' at 15 cents each. You may yet have these gifts for Christmas, if you live near enough. or if you get started a bit late you can still sell the Christmas numbers and have the presents ready for New Year's.

Our premiums are all 'more than worth while.' In fact, we are willing to return your money if you don't find your premium splendid value for the work you do to earn it. If you like to send money at once to us, with the order, you get premiums all the sooner, as we send by return mail, same as the 'Pictorials.' Only be sure we get the full 15 cents for each copy, and send us the money by money order or registered letter.

FOUR COPIES Xmas 'Pictorial' at 15 cents each will secure your choice of:—1. A jackknife with chain and swivel. 2. A girl's penknife. 3. Folding pocket scissors. 4. A child's plated table set. 5. A dainty gift book, Scripture or secular subject as preferred. 6. Three Maple Leaf Brooches (or cravat pins if preferred).

SIX COPIES Xmas 'Pictorial' sold at 15 cents each would secure:—1. Two blade Rogers' jackknife. 2. One blade jackknife, extra quality steel, hole in handle for ring or chain. 3. Pair 8-inch cutting sheares, tension screw, a very special article. 4. 'Sea, Forest and Prairie,' an ever popular book of real Canadian stories, by Canadian young people.

Larger sales bring larger premiums; we send our list with first order, and full particulars.

Remember, these offers are special offers for the Christmas number, sold at 15 cents, so make the most of them while they last, boys and girls alike.

Boys and girls who live in Montreal and suburbs may send to us by mail for a premium list, but must come to the 'Witness' Office with the money, in order to get the 'Pictorials' and their premiums.

Address, John Dougall & Son, agents for the 'Canadian Pictorial,' 'Witness' Office, Montreal.

Premiums.

We have a fine lot of miscellaneous premiums to be given for one, two, three or more new subscriptions to the 'Messenger.' Write for particulars.

THE LAST WORD
THE BEST

'Messenger' readers are about to select their reading matter for another year—probably before another issue of the 'Messenger.' reaches them their subscriptions to various papers will have become due and will have been sent to the publishers. Therefore we wish to give them the following

REMINDERS

We have in the last few issues given full particulars of our various clubbing and premium offers, and we asked our readers to keep these for reference, but if mislaid another copy will be sent free for the asking. We have only space in this issue for the simplest reminders of these.

On page 15 of this issue will be found some of our clubbing offers. Be sure to read them over carefully it will pay you.

Other Special Offers

Four copies of the 'Northern Messenger' to separate addresses, three of which are bona fide new subsscribers for only $1.00.

	For one year.
The 'Northern Messenger' and 'Weekly Witness and Canadian Homestead,' only...	$1.20
The 'Northern Messenger' and 'World Wide'.....	1.75
The 'Northern Messenger' and 'Canadian Pictorial'.....	1.00
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JOHN DOUGALL & SON.

'Witness' Block, Montreal.

if it were necessary you could teach and support yourself.'

'I don't know that I could. I ought to have some practice in it before I get old. If I could get a few years of practice now, while my knowledge is fresh in my mind, why, I could pick it up more easily if I had to at 40 or 50. Now there is Miss X. Her father left her $100,000, but her bad brother-in-law stole it, and she had no idea what to do to support herself. I don't see why girls ought not to go to work as much as boys. Everybody says work is healthy, and just as good for the mind and the soul as for the body. I wish I could be your stenographer or could teach. I would do it just as well as if I were a boy—now you try me and see if I wouldn't.'

She had the right and common sense view of the matter. The girl at home, after her education is finished, is likely, unless she has some hard and steady work to do, to become lazy, sickly, eccentric—or worse, and where there are two or more such daughters in a family, the discontent is likely to be in proportion to the number of the unemployed.

'The bachelor girl' has been the butt of the humorist, and has been regarded by too many of our ethical writers as a menace to the home and to the state. But the 'bachelor girl,' as many of us know her, is a busy, happy, useful and noble creature, who is trying to solve the problem of the single woman in a truly good and practical way. She is not always refined—not always wise—but her face is usually turned in the right direction—for she earns her own living, keeps herself upright and bravely works out her own salvation.

She generally lives away from home, because she generally has to in order to reach her place of business. The girls who live at home can learn many lessons from her. And the parents may as well understand that their grown-up daughters and their grown-up sons are far more alike than they have ever before imagined. Both crave independence, and who shall dare to say that they do not equally deserve it and need it, for their well being and their happiness?

'Prayer Brings Pardon!'

A Story of Old France.

(The 'Christian.')

Madame Celestine Carrier had for twenty years made the surplices for the choir of the cathedral, when her son—her only son, Alphonse—was carried off by the conscription—for those were the days when they took even the widow's only son. She lived just under the shadow of the cathedral, in a cottage so small that it was called by the townspeople, 'The Hole in the Wall,' and the name stuck. As the youth kissed his mother at parting, he said:

'But of course, I shall soon again be with you, mother! Dry those tears and think only of the time of my return.'

'Ah!' cried the widow, 'you speak after the manner of this life only—we may never meet again; the good God alone knows the end of everything—make Him your friend, Alphonse.' With many repeated farewells he promised his mother that her God should be his, and that his waywardness and folly were now at an end; and he added:

'Mother I am now a soldier of the King—my life is his. I must see that I do not disgrace him or my country.'

'Remember the words, my son,' said his mother, 'Fear God,' then it will be easy for you to do the next thing, 'Honor the King.'

The widow was nearly heartbroken at the loss of her son, and when he was sent on foreign service it needed all her faith and trust in God to believe that still all was well. Years passed, she heard nothing of or from Alphonse; but she never ceased to pray for him; she never gave up the hope that wherever he was, if he were still living, he would become a son, by his own choice, of the loving God. 'Ah,' her sister would say, 'you have great patience, and more faith in Alphonse than I!

'My patience,' Madame Carrier would reply, 'is for Alphonse; my faith is in God. It is He, not Alphonse, to whom I pray.' Still, the years passed with no tidings. One day, just thirty years after Alphonse had left his native place his mother—now seventy years of age—was arranging her linen closet when she came across an unfinished piece of needlework. She called to her sister:

'Babette, here is the fine linen shirt I was making for Alphonse when he was called away. I will finish it, and he shall have it when he comes home.'

'Celestine, are you mad?' asked Babette. 'Alphonse would be fifty years of age were he living, and that is a lad's shirt.'

But Celestine only smiled, and proceeded to finish the garment. On the third day it was completed; but the eyes had grown weary over their task of love, and in the twilight the worker fell asleep.

'Awake! awake!' cried Babette, 'for here is thy grandson!'

Celestine awoke with a start. Her grandson?

'While I slept thou didst my dreaming, Babette,' she cried. But, as a young man, straight and tall, came out of the shadow: 'Oh, my Alphonse!' she exclaimed, throwing her arms around his neck, 'thou hast returned, and all is well, as I prayed.' 'Grandmother,' said the young man, 'I am indeed Alphonse, but the son of your son. He sent me to ask forgiveness for him.' 'Forgiveness for my son, whom I have loved and prayed for these fifty years!' was her reply. 'Tell my Alphonse prayer brings pardon.'

At these words Alphonse himself appeared. He looked with tender pity on her who bore him, his eyes filled with tears: 'Mother,' he said, 'thy son was lost and is found; for long he walked in evil ways, but God has given thee thy answer, and saved thy son.' Babette looked on as one in a dream—Celestine had conquered! 'Why didst leave thy mother in doubt all these years?' she asked. 'Nay, not in doubt,' said Alphonse. 'I knew my mother trusted in God, and though I turned from Him I knew He was her Comforter.'

Then Widow Carrier showed her son the shirt she had just finished. 'Said I not so to thee?' he asked, turning to his son, 'that we should find grandmother making something for our arrival? And now I will wear this garment, for I am travel-stained.'

And so Celestine's faith was rewarded, and she was content. 'But if God loves to bless, why,' asked Babette, 'did He tarry?' 'Thou and thy "buts"!' cried Celestine. 'Does every child get all he asks for at once? Didst not, thyself, yesterday refuse a toy to René, until he should know how to use the gift? I am content. God has sent me two sons today, and both are his. He knows that now I have learned the value of his gifts.' But Babette, who did not understand, shook her head.—M. B. Gerds.

Selected Recipes.

ORANGE FILLING.—Mix thoroughly half a cup of sugar and a rounding tablespoon of cornstarch, then add in the following order a tablespoon of lemon juice, the juice of one orange and a little of the rind, one egg, three-quarters of a cup of boiling water and a tablespoon of butter. Cook ten minutes in a double boiler, stirring constantly. Cool before spreading.

CHICKEN JELLY.—Boil one cupful of left-over chicken gravy, and one and one-half cupfuls of water for five minutes; remove from the range, and strain. Have ready one pint of cold minced chicken, and one ounce of gelatine dissolved in one-half cupful of water. Add this to the liquor with one-half teaspoonful of curry powder, and one-half teaspoonful of salt. Line bottom of the mold with thin slices of lemon, and pour in the jelly; set this on the ice to cool and harden.

SALTED ALMONDS.—A cooking-school formula for salting almonds requires that after shelling and blanching, the nuts shall be boiled in strong salt water for ten minutes, allowing one teaspoonful of salt to each cupful of nuts. Dry thoroughly on a cloth and sprinkle with melted butter or salad oil, a teaspoonful to each cupful. Spread on a tin and put into a hot oven till they are a light brown. Shake often, watching carefully that they do not burn. Drain on blotting paper.

MOCK TURTLE SOUP.—To a soup bone add one pound of meat and one pound of liver (veal heart and liver are best), one-half cup of browned flour, three hard-boiled eggs. Chop the heart, liver and eggs. Add the browned flour and season to taste.

EGG SOUP.—Wash and scrape two small carrots, a turnip, two sticks of celery, and an onion. Slice these vegetables very thin and fry in a tablespoonful of butter until of a yellow color. Take up the vegetables into a strainer, put them in a stewpan, with three pints of water, seasoning of pepper and salt, and a very little sugar. Let the soup simmer for two hours, then pass all through a hair sieve. Return the soup to the fire, and thicken it with potato flour made into a smooth paste with cold milk. Meanwhile, poach an egg for each person, lay these in a tureen, add a gill of cream to the soup, and pour it over the eggs. Scatter chopped yolk of eggs over the soup and serve.

BREAKFAST MUFFINS.—Measure a pint of flour after sifting; add a teaspoonful of salt, a tablespoon of sugar and two teaspoonfuls of baking powder and sift thoroughly to mix. Then rub in a large tablespoonful of butter. Beat two eggs light and add them to a cup of milk; stir this into a cup of cold cooked rice and add in the dry mixture and beat to a smooth batter. Pour into buttered gem pans or muffin rings and bake in a quick oven for half an hour.

VEGETABLE OMELET.—Omelets in which vegetables are used in the place of meats are nice for entrees. To make a tomato omelet put a tablespoonful of butter in a frying pan. When melted add a cup of freshly stewed tomatoes that have been drained free from liquid, and let cook for a couple of minutes. Beat up six eggs, season with salt and pepper, and add them to the tomatoes. Mix together with a fork, then let the omelet cook, fold over and serve at once. A corn omelet, an asparagus-top omelet or an omelet with green peas, may be made simply by beating a cupful of the cooked vegetable into the eggs before they are cooked and cooking like a plain omelet. A delicious omelet with herbs is made as follows: Break six eggs into a bowl, add half a gill of sweet cream, a little finely chopped parsley, and just enough chopped tarragon and chives to lend it a flavor. Beat well and cook like a plain omelet.—'Tribune.'

I Know.

I know the hand that is guiding me through
the shadow to the light,
And I know that all betiding me is meted out
aright;
I know that the thorny path I tread, is ruled
by a golden line,
And I know that the darker life's tangled
thread, the richer the deep design.

—Anon.

The Letters of Queen Victoria.

Every 'Messenger' reader will be deeply interested in the new edition, at a popular price, of the letters of our late beloved Queen Victoria. No home will be complete without a set. Just think of it! The letters the good Queen wrote from her girlhood up to her widowhood—letters full of personal interest and charm—all the more because they were written with no thought of such publicity—letters that make Kings and Queens, and Emperors, and many notables of lower rank, move before us as very real human beings—letters that give us an idea of the inner workings of great events that happened during that long reign. Who would not wish to own this remarkable work? His Majesty's direct command is behind this popular edition. He wants all his people to be able to get it. Our readers will right loyally respond and we believe very many thousands of sets will be secured in Canada during the next few months.

The 'Messenger' for one year, new or renewal, to any address in Canada, outside Montreal and suburbs, and these three fascinating volumes for only one dollar and seventy-five cents ($1.75), this would make a splendid Christmas gift. AS A PREMIUM, the three volumes will be sent postpaid for SEVEN GENUINE NEW subscriptions at 40 cents each to the 'Messenger.'

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Milk Soup for Children.

One large carrot, two turnips, one small head of celery or one lettuce or one-half pound of spinach, one onion, three or four sprays of water cress, a celery root and a small strip of lemon peel are required for this recipe. Boil all these vegetables—having, of course, previously peeled and sliced them when required—until they are absolutely soft; press them through a sieve, and, if sufficiently cooked, there should be a very small residue left. Place them in a clean, lined saucepan, and let them get thoroughly hot; then add as much milk as will bring them to the consistency of cream, one-half ounce of fresh butter, the yolks of two eggs and pepper and salt in moderation. Allow the soup to get quite warm; but no boiling must take place, or it will become curdled. Moreover, the butter must just melt, as cooked butter is unwholesome for children. This recipe can be altered by using more or less of the various vegetables. The exact quantity of milk cannot be given, as the size of the vegetables varies considerably.

A Dweller at the Threshold.

(By the Rev. Charles E. Chase, in the 'Congregationalist.')

There are people not having the pleasure of a real garden who find luxurious compensation in the enjoyment of a seedman's catalogue. Others without books find company congenial in the publisher's list. To me there is pleasure in both.

Turning from labor to rest, or from work to study, as every gardener should, I leave the modest turnip and fragrant rose for the companionship of both humble and great in the society of books, the goodly fellowship assembled in a Century catalogue or Macmillan's list. Once when reviewing a page of titles I came to this, A Dweller at the Threshold. I had never seen the book, nor have I yet. The author's name I forget, but the name of his book I cannot. Indeed, I knew too well the Dweller at the Threshold.

Often he has frightened me, lied to me, cheated me. Sometimes in fierce wrestling he has thrown me, beaten me shamefully and sore. And then, sometimes, I have boldly dashed him down.

He creeps at times within the portals, but his home is only at the threshold. Lurking away in the shadow or standing out in gleaming light, he is there, alert and quick to hear the footfall of each coming one. Sometimes he is afraid and silent. Again he speaks in jest or earnest, as may please his mood or serve his need. Now smiles in ridicule or sneers in scorn; now whispers, now cries out, and now reaches insidiously a fawning hand or drives a vicious blow.

Observe the Temple of Science. He is there. The Temple of Invention and Industry, and he is there. The Temple of Religion and Faith—there also. The Shrine of Home, the Halls of Friendship, the Gymnasium of Health, the Theater of Fame, and alas! he is there.

Many approach these portals. A few, a very few, enter without strife, but more after stormy battle with the Dweller at the Threshold. Others, defeated, try again; and defeated, try—yet again and win. Some stand about in faltering hesitation while the day lasts, but with the falling shadows disappear.

Now the name of the Dweller at the Threshold is Doubt. Doubt whose wife is Distrust, whose children are Hesitation and Fear and Failure. These abide at the threshold, these hover about the beginning of all good things. When success is promised, Doubt suggests failure; for a clear sky sends fog, and where there is peace, battle smoke. This is what Doubt does for the student, the explorer, the statesman, the inventor, the worshiper, the lover and friend.

But over every portal, above the Dweller at the Threshold, is an inspiring inscription, a declaration of hope and promise. Whoever looks upon it takes heart and presses on, becomes a knight invincible. Such a one beholds not nor fears him who dwells beneath. To look up and behold the inscription is to escape or conquer the Dweller at the Threshold. To look down to behold him is to miss the inscription. Never are both within the same area of vision.

And the inscription is this immortal manifesto of beauty and strength:

> Ask, and it shall be given you;
> Seek, and ye shall find;
> Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
> For every one that asketh receiveth;
> And he that seeketh findeth;
> And to him that knocketh
> It shall be opened.

So shall it ever be with the man who walks with God. No trap of man's devising can catch his feet, no malice disturb his spirit, no mist or fog, no battle smoke or cloud, obscure his vision. Faith is greater than Doubt. Courage is greater than Fear. The solution is greater than the problem, a speaking providence more than the silent sphinx. The promise above, realized in heart and life, is always greater than the Dweller at the Threshold; as much greater and by such distance as the heights of hope, whose rock foundation is the eternal covenant of Jehovah, rise in majestic splendor above the gloomy caverns in the valley of despair.

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Duties. — Six months' residence upon and cultivation of the land in each of three years. A homesteader may live within nine miles of his homestead on a farm of at least 80 acres solely owned and occupied by him or by his father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister.

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W. W. CORY,
Deputy of the Minister of the Interior.

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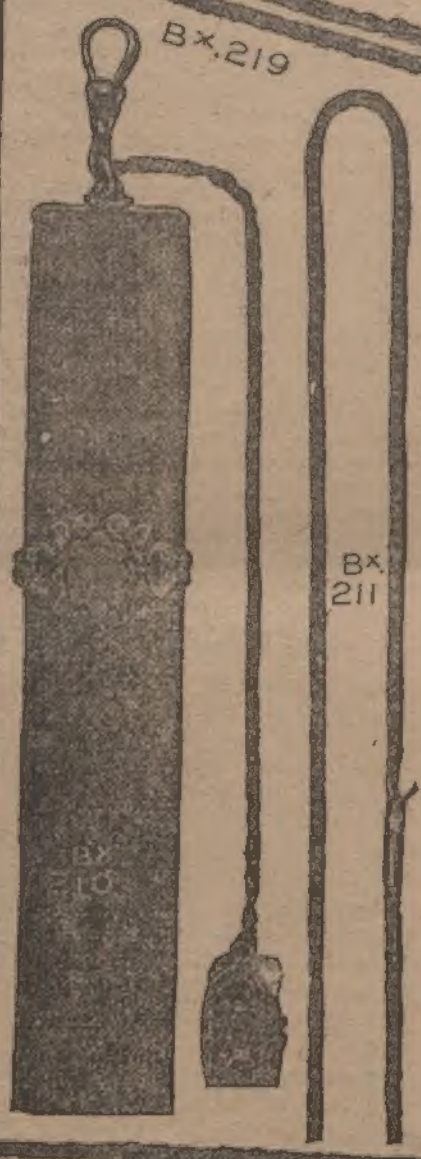

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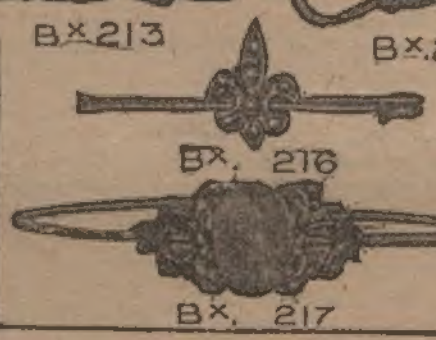

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